

# Izzy Einstein, the Champion



*Tireless Work of the Versatile U. S. Different Disguises, and Masquerades Chinaman, Then as a Negro, Drives Up to as a Rich Clubman and the Next Evening in a Cemetery as a Grave-Digger*



**His Masterpiece of Disguise Was When Izzy Einstein, After Hours of Patient Labor and Finally Calling in the Assistance of an Actor, Succeeded in Accomplishing a "Make-up" as a Chinaman Which Was Good Enough to Pass the Sharp-eyed Lookout Spies in New York's Chinatown.**

EVERYBODY is hearing about Izzy Einstein these days. Izzy is the New York Federal prohibition officer whose methods of obtaining evidence are stranger than the celebrated detectives of fiction. He is as shrewd as Sherlock Holmes, (before Sherlock began to see spooks), as spectacular as Nick Carter and as relentless as Javert. He is a master of disguise.

One day he slinks about as a Chinaman, the next day as a grave digger and the next as a negro or a spendthrift millionaire. Prohibition Director Ralph A. Day recently called him the best detective in the United States, and it is significant that in the recent shake-up of New York's prohibition forces Izzy and his partner, "Moe" Smith, were said to be the only two agents to retain their former posts.

It follows that Izzy Einstein is the bogie-man of all the bootleggers in New York City or State. And with reason. In less than three years, since he quit his job as postal clerk to become a revenue man, Izzy has made 1,800 arrests, seized almost \$2,000,000 worth of contraband liquor and assumed more than 400 disguises. Furthermore, he is an expert in building up a case so that convictions are obtained in twenty-four out of every twenty-five cases he brings into court.

If genius is that capacity for taking infinite pains, Izzy is a genius, for no one has gone to greater pains. At the expense of the Government, Izzy has stocked his wardrobe with every conceivable disguise, to be ready on a moment's notice. His dressing table contains more grease paint than a leading man's. He has hats of all shapes and colors; a dozen sets of false whiskers and wigs; shoes, old and new; dress suits, golf suits, ten pairs of eyeglasses; but mainly Izzy relies on his own nerve, opportunities and ready wits and keeping eternally at his work.

The story of Izzy's recent impersonation of a grave digger illustrates how closely he sticks to his job.

He had taken a day off to attend the funeral of an old friend. The cemetery was on the outskirts of New York City, and before the funeral procession had gone many miles the mourners were dozing in their seats—all but Izzy.

From force of habit his eagle eye roved among all the houses along the road. He studied every passing hip, basement and bucket—every wagon and automobile, and presently was rewarded by a rather commonplace incident that took place in the backyard of a residence just across the street from the cemetery.

Two men were crossing this backyard, carrying a large galvanized iron can into a shed at the rear of the lot. Now there was nothing peculiar about that to the ordinary observer; but Izzy had noticed that the men had looked furtively about, as if they were afraid of being seen.

Izzy weighed his obligations to the Government and to the dead, and decided matters by stepping out of the limousine as it turned into the cemetery gate on the pretext of making a telephone call. He sauntered back to the house and took keen notice of everything about it from the corner of his eye.

There was nothing to verify his suspicions except a peculiar dank smell, reminiscent of the musty odor behind swinging doors in bygone days. But only a rank amateur would think of raiding a residence on so slender a pretext as a smell. There must be conclusive evidence of the manufacture and sale of liquor, if the case is to hold in court. And this evidence is not so easy to get.

Izzy returned to the grave of his friend to think it over. The last rites had been administered and the mourners were starting home. Only two grave diggers re-

mained in the thickening dusk to complete the ceremony. As they heaped the clods on the casket, Izzy considered ways and means.

The suspected house was the only building on the long block. It was therefore impossible to set a watch from the street. The only place of concealment was somewhere among the tombstones facing the building from the cemetery. Izzy shuddered, buttoned his overcoat tightly about his neck, and began looking for a soft grave on which to spend the cold February night.

He hid until sundown, when the cemetery gates were closed. Then he moved cautiously over to a tomb facing the house and crouched in the shrubbery that surrounded it to watch and wait for developments.

For three hours nothing happened. It became colder—darker. An icy wind whistled about the headstones, and Izzy's teeth began to chatter as he began to remember all the ghost stories of his boyhood. He had just about decided to climb the fence and go home, when he heard footsteps ringing along the sidewalk in the distance.

He strained his eyes and distinguished two men, each carrying a heavy bundle. They stopped at the house and climbed the stairs, rapping three times at the door. A long line of yellow light appeared and Izzy knew that the cautious inmate had opened the door just one inch.

"We've brought the yeast," whispered one of the men at the door. His voice was not sufficiently guarded to prevent the information drifting across the street and finding lodgment in Izzy's delicate eardrum. It was enough. As the door closed and the bolt rasped into place, Izzy scrambled over the iron fence and started back to town for his assistant, Moe Smith, and a search warrant.

But still Izzy had no legal reason to break into the house. Anybody has a perfect right to buy all the yeast they want. More evidence than that was needed. It was up to Izzy and Moe to prove their suspicions beyond the shadow of doubt—and then to raid the place and arrest the offenders.

Early the next morning a ragged, ill-kempt man left the home of Mr. Isadore Einstein, on the east side of New York City and proceeded to the nearest subway

**Izzy Einstein Had Reason to Suspect That Whiskey Was Being Made Somewhere Around the Livery Stable, So He Hired a Hansom Cab for a Week, Dressed His Round Form with Second-Hand Livery, Borrowed a Well-Worn, Shiny, Cabby's Hat, and with Whip in Hand Drove Up to the Stable and Engaged Board for His Horse and Storage for His Cab for a Few Days to Enable Him to Investigate the Stable Without Arousing Suspicion.**

station, where he was presently joined by another gentleman, equally dilapidated and out at the elbows and heels.

An hour later this ragged pair appeared at the superintendent's office at the Woodlawn Cemetery and applied for work as experienced grave diggers. The superintendent was sorry, but he had plenty of grave diggers. If they liked, he would take their names and addresses and let them know when business picked up.

But Izzy—it was none other—persisted. "I'll make you a proposition," he stated. "How much do you pay for a regular sized grave?"

"Six dollars," replied the superintendent. "And you won't get a nickel more anywhere around New York."

Izzy conferred briefly with Moe. "I'll tell you what we'll do," he said to the superintendent. "We'll dig all the graves you got for \$3—that's \$1.50 apiece, and fill 'em up besides. What do you say? We're up against it."

"You're hired," said the superintendent briskly. He pointed to a pile of shovels and led them to an obscure corner of the cemetery to begin work.

All day long Izzy and Moe picked and shovelled, digging and filling seven graves. When evening came they offered to work overtime, and after showing them how to get out of the cemetery, the superintendent left and went home.

Immediately the grave diggers transferred their operations to the street side of the cemetery, less than 100 feet from the suspected moonshine distillery. A man standing in front of the house regarded them with bored interest while they worked with might and main digging a grave close to the fence.

For a while it seemed as if they were working in vain. The man simply was not interested enough to cross the street, and that was the sole object of their disguise. They wanted to get acquainted and obtain whisky with no suspicion on his part as to their identity.

Moe suggested that they call over and ask him for a drink of water, but Izzy vetoed the idea. "I'll bring him over here," he predicted. "Just watch."

He climbed out of the grave and commenced work on another while Moe started

a third a few feet away. When they had dug a few feet into the ground, two more were started, until six graves, partly dug, stretched along the cemetery fence.

With each new grave the man on the steps across the street showed more signs of interest. He called someone from within the house and pointed at the fur rows of earth. A third person was called and all three stared in wonder.

At last he crossed the street and peered in through the iron railing. Izzy and Moe pretended not to notice the attention they attracted.

"How many more have we got to dig?" Moe called over from his grave.

"Eleven," said Izzy, without looking up. The bootlegger's hair stood on end.

"Eleven more!" he shouted. "Did somebody blow up a hotel?"

Izzy dropped his shovel and filled his pipe thoughtfully.

"It does seem peculiar," he admitted. "But that's the way it goes. Sometimes people won't die for years at a time, then all of a sudden seventy-five or a hundred will make up their minds at the same time. It certainly gives me a pain. Now, if we didn't have this blinkety-blank prohibition a fella could stand it."

"You said something," agreed Moe. "I'd give ten dollars right now for a half a pint of the real stuff."

The man on the other side of the fence looked cautiously around to be sure no one was listening. He hesitated and then winked mysteriously.

"Drop over to the house when you get through work," he suggested. "Maybe I can fix you up."

Izzy and Moe expressed their gratitude with the greatest enthusiasm and pitched into their grave digging for all they were worth. When it became dark they stacked their tools in the superintendent's office and strolled over to the bootlegger's home.

The bootlegger greeted them cordially and introduced them to the other members of the firm as the hard working grave diggers from across the street. At Izzy's suggestion the party adjourned to the kitchen where the revenue men bought the first—and last—round for the house. On step satisfied Izzy as to the evidence, and before the startled bootleggers knew what was going on he had reached into the pocket of his overalls and brought out the warrant. Then, while Moe guarded the prisoners, Izzy kicked in a padlocked door at one end of the room.

The contents of the next room nearly blinded the prohibition officer and more than justified all of his premonitions on the way to the funeral.

The first thing he saw was three large stills going at full blast. Next was a row of fifty-one barrels, containing alcohol.

Further investigation revealed several jars of chemical coloring and essences of various liqueurs, used to give the spurious liquor the taste and appearance of the well-known brands.

There was a bottle of oil, which, added to the moonshine whiskey, gave it that "bead" or collar of bubbles which connoisseurs regard as the infallible test of quality. And in another room the prohibition officers found innumerable counterfeit labels and government stamps that would have deceived all but an expert. All that night the three bootleggers were made to carry the evidence to a dray, which was then taken to New York for evidence.

Fred Libby, owner of the house, was not at home when the raid took place. He surrendered to Izzy three days later and was fined \$500 and sentenced to serve six months in prison.

The episode of the grave digger is a fair sample of Izzy's more spectacular methods of obtaining evidence, but he does not consider it represents his best work. Like Edgar Allen Poe's detective character, Izzy thinks that simplicity represents the consummate art in his daily business of detecting.

His raid last Summer on a fashionable cafe near Far Rockaway, New York, is a convenient instance of this theory.

For some weeks neighbors of the cafe owner had complained to Prohibition Director Day of boisterous parties that disturbed their sleep. Izzy was assigned to investigate.

As a matter of course he used one of his dress suits and wore a dozen of his paste diamonds. In the guise of a nouveau riche spender he rolled up to the cabaret in the prohibition department's most luxurious \$7,000 limousine, handed his silk hat and stick to the girl at the cloak room and commenced to distribute lavish tips right and left.

He was shown to one of the best tables, and a waiter obsequiously hovered at his elbow for his order—which was whiskey. But there had been many threats of interference from the worthy people of Far Rockaway, and the waiter was not to be caught snoozing. He regarded Mr. Einstein with a cold, poker eye and said there was no whiskey to be had. Right at this point the ordinary prohibition agent would have returned to New York. But Izzy is no ordinary agent.

Two hundred feet from the cabaret was the warm, inviting ocean beach, dotted with bath houses and bathers. Izzy checked his dress suit at the nearest bath house, took a quick dip in the ocean and returned to the cabaret with his roly-poly figure encased in a bright green and yellow bathing suit.

Now Izzy will tell you himself that the bathing suit was a master stroke.

What waiter or bartender ever conceived of a revenue man wearing a bathing suit? Certainly not the waiter who took Izzy's order for a full pint—at least he didn't until Izzy reached under the belt of his bathing trunks and fished out his government badge. The waiter, manager and half the staff shared in the rude surprise.

In another instance Izzy's dress suit was not sufficient for the bootlegging water, even when it was supplemented with a beard, toupee and papier mache nose which the detective sometimes uses to escape detection.

That was in Reisenweber's famous Broadway cabaret a few weeks ago. In vain Izzy repeated his order. The fishy-eyed waiter was apologetic, but unconvinced.

"The manager would like your card," he said, after Izzy had sent him to that dignitary.

Now it happens that business cards are the simplest devices in all Izzy's bag of tricks. He has them in all pockets, bearing all names and occupations—except that of prohibition officer. The card he handed to the waiter bore the inscription, "A. Cohen, Sacramental Wines." With a significant drooping of the right eyelid he added to the waiter that it would be to the manager's interest to rush his order.

An hour later the waiter presented the

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